



Title: Conquered at the Cross

Theme: Grasping Kingdom Authority in the Cross of Christ

Series: Grasping Our Authority in Christ

“But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:15-19)

“Grasping Kingdom Authority”

In grasping our authority in Christ there are six key topics that must be addressed, the first being “Grasping Kingdom Authority.” On this topic we have had our “Enemies Exposed,” come to realize that “A Battle Rages,” discovered “Surviving Satan’s Realm,” and today “Conquered at the Cross.”

Christians who grasp their authority in Christ base their guidelines for living on the truth. At the present time we live in a sin cursed world, therefore, sinners are saved by grace. They have Holy Spirit illumination of Ephesians 2:4-5, “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ... it is by grace you have been saved.”

Living in a sin trodden world has great dangers which are understood by those who live victoriously in Christ. These Christians understand the sin principle and how it slowly creeps in undetected until it makes its public announcement, destroys a person’s effectiveness, and causes destruction to all who are associated with that person’s life. Learning what happened to Ephesus gives us a clear picture of how sin births its destructive power.

Ephesus was often mentioned in the New Testament. (Acts 18:19-21; 19:1, 17-10; 20:16; 1 Corinthians 15:32; 16:8; 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:18; 4:12; Revelation 1:11 and 2:1) Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, it was noted for its bustling harbors, broad avenues, gymnasiums, baths, huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana. In her day she was one of the cultural and commercial centers of western Asia Minor. (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

Ephesus was a real city that represented that place where mankind could fill his flesh with Satan's lies, enjoy false worship and feed upon all that this world system has to offer. A place that needed to hear the gospel and, thank God, they got to hear the gospel proclaimed. (Acts 18:18-27) There were disciples of Christ there who received the Holy Spirit of Christ (Acts 19:1-10) thus bringing into that region a true church that was faithful in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 1:1)

Although there was a great representation of the church of Christ working in Ephesus she eventually came to ruin. (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; The New International Dictionary of the Bible; Wikipedia Encyclopedia) As we see God dealing with cities and nations who deny Him or turn from Him we would think that Ephesus would have been overcome by plagues, destroyed by enemies or demolished by earthquakes. However, according to an article published in "Our Daily Bread" (September 24, 1998) Ephesus' downfall was silent and non-violent.

Silt was the reason for the gradual decline of the flourishing metropolis of Ephesus. Over the years, fine sedimentary particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders. (10,000 Sermon Illustrations) What happened to Ephesus is symbolic of what happens to the soul of mankind.

Let the Holy Spirit place this truth deep within your heart. Little evil practices and small acts of disobedience may seem harmless. However, Christians who let the silt of sin gradually accumulate will find themselves far from the Lord. Spiritual life will come to ruin. This is why the Holy Spirit moved the writer of Hebrews not to be hardened by sin's deceit. (Hebrews 3:13) Christians who grasp their authority in Christ do not let sin accumulate in their lives. They lay those sins at the foot of the Cross.

I would propose to you that God has gloriously given us kingdom authority. Even though the first Adam legally lost it, the second Adam, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ righteously regained what was lost by Adam. How did Adam enable sin to come upon all of mankind? What did the blood of Christ purchase for those who come to Christ?

Understanding authority lost

The first step toward enjoying Kingdom Authority is to gain some understanding of what authority was lost by Adam and Eve's sin. Genesis 1:26-28 says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

Catch the original intent, “Let us make man in our image, in our own likeness.” (Genesis 1:26) The three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, consulted about it and agreed, because mankind was meant to be dedicated and devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Solomon makes a definite allusion to the original state of man in Ecclesiastes 7:12, “This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.” (Barnes Notes; The New Bible Commentary; A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory; The Pulpit Commentary; The New American Commentary) The Hebrew word, “upright” (yasar) quite often means right in an ethical or emotional sense, as agreeable or pleasing. A Biblical example of this is found in that familiar phrase “right in God’s sight.” (The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament)

Originally, before the fall of man through Adam, mankind had habitual conformity of all his natural abilities to be able to walk in the whole will of God. He understood divine truths and there were no mistakes in his knowledge of God’s perfect will. There was a readiness to walk in the will of God without reluctance or resistance. His affections were regular and his thoughts were fixed on the Lord’s best. Thus was the holiness and blessedness of Adam and Eve. Before the schemes of mankind and the questioning of God’s best, man had every opportunity to know and walk in the full counsel of God. There was a day in the original setting when mankind knew the sound of the Lord walking through the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:8)

In the original setting man enjoyed authority over all of creation. God in His wisdom, knowledge of the weakness of man created mankind last of all the creatures, so he might not be suspected to be God’s helper.

Therefore, it was the great favor of God and should had been considered by Eve and Adam to have been a great privilege for them to make sure things stayed in proper order. Christians who enjoy their authority in Christ have the same revelation and illumination as King David when he wrote, “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! ...what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.” (Psalm 8:1, 4-8)

This God given authority gave Adam and Eve divine knowledge and ability to govern agriculture, science, animal husbandry, literally everything on the earth. It was unlike today when different people need to work hard and long to learn how to keep this earth productive. They knew it all and all creation responded to that authority. Adam and Eve before the fall did not have to worry about the mouth of the lion or the paw of the bear as David did while shepherding sheep. They were not concerned about being bitten by snakes, killed by bulls, or otherwise injured

by God's creatures. They did not have to build tornado shelters or fear earthquakes. Fires and flash flooding did not exist.

In original creation God used man as His representative. The Lord's commission for mankind was to fill the earth with people and to subdue everything upon it. Subdue means taming and caring for the earth so it could continue to be of profitable use. (Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary) Adam's rule was to be like that of God for the Trinity's own good, not for his own pleasure. Self pleasure is what caused Eve to be misled by the devil and Adam to heed his wife's enticements.

This Godly character working through man is elsewhere found in the Word of God. Proverbs 12:10 says, "A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal... and Proverbs 27:23 says, "Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds..."

Let the Holy Spirit of Christ place this truth deep into your spiritual heart. As originally created, man enjoyed fellowship with God and had authority to exercise God given knowledge to care for everything in this world. He literally enjoyed heaven on earth.

Adam, broke a special covenant with the Lord

In original creation mankind walked in true fellowship with God, but mankind, Adam, broke a special covenant with the Lord. Genesis 2:15-17 says, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'

Our key text today is a "Covenant of Works" (Easton's Bible Dictionary) of which Christ redeemed the negative consequence of Adam's willful choices. This covenant is between two parties, God, the moral governor and Adam, a free moral agent and representative of all his natural future generations. The condition lay before Adam was perfect obedience to the law given at that time with the test being that he abstain from eating the fruit of the "tree of knowledge." The penalty was spiritual and physical death, the consequences we all live with today. (Easton's Bible Dictionary; The New International Dictionary of the Bible) The Lord gave Adam a job and a warning along with the privilege of plenty of food, wonderful surroundings, and the enjoyment of God's fellowship. Yet Adam and his wife just had to have the forbidden fruit, willfully breaking the covenant. (Willmington's Bible Handbook -7)

The word "covenant" in the Bible is God's revelation of Himself in the way of promise or of favor to men. (Genesis 9:8-11; Jeremiah 33:20; Easton's Bible Commentary) There is the Biblical account of God's covenant with Abraham. (Genesis 17:2) There is the Old Testament covenant of the priesthood that carries on through

the 1,000 year reign of Christ. (Numbers 25:12; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 20:6) Those whom Christ lives in and through are priests unto the gospel only because of Jesus' eternal priesthood which is superior to all priesthoods. (The New International Dictionary of the Bible; Hebrews chapter 7; The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

What the Holy Spirit wants you to grasp in the whole counsel of God's Word is that God has a "covenant," through Christ Jesus which has the promise of eternal life to all who come in repentance. Our key text today speaks clearly of Adam breaking God's covenant thus bringing physical and spiritual death to all of mankind. Listen to this Biblical discourse between God and Adam, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it.' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:17-19)

Reverent fear of willfully breaking God's covenant

Christians who grasp their authority in Christ understand that God has a covenant that leads to enjoyment of the promises and favors of the Lord. They also live in reverent fear of willfully breaking God's covenant. Romans 1 says, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--His eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened... Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts... Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts... Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. (Romans 1:18-29)

Adam had the opportunity to enjoy the promises and favors of God. What Jesus did on the Cross restored the covenant with God, therefore, all of mankind has the opportunity to know all that God has made clear in the Bible. Because of the danger of being surrendered to a depraved mind, Christians who enjoy their authority in Christ are aware of the signs of living in the sinful flesh. They are:

- alienation from God, Christ and lacking Holy Spirit sensitivity (Ephesians 4:18)
- spiritual blindness (John 12:40; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 2:11)
- continual thoughts of ways to satisfy the sinful nature (Romans 6:6)
- a life that continually produces bad fruit (Matthew 7:17)
- claiming to be a Christian yet controlled by the flesh, the world, and the lies of the devil (1 John 1:6-7)

- deception by passion and pleasure causing foolish living and disobedience to Biblical authority (Titus 3:3)
- after having been set free by knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ only once more enslaved and in worse shape than before. (2 Peter 2:20)
- friendship with the world's views and questioning God's Word. (James 4:4)
- choosing to live in the world and avoid the truths of God and the fellowship of true believers. (John 3:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:4)
- resisting the Holy Spirit's urging to do what is right and to repent, turn from all that is heart-breaking to the Lord. (Acts 7:51)

Christians who grasp “Kingdom Authority” place themselves under the shed blood of Christ

Breaking the blood purchased covenant with God leads to a depraved mind, keeping the unrepentant from the perfect will of God. Christians who grasp “Kingdom Authority” place themselves under the shed blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:22 says, “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

The blood of Christ is the ratification of the covenant of grace that is offered to all who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Adam legally destroyed the covenant of life spiritually and physically, however, the Lord Jesus Christ righteously regained everything Adam lost by giving His life upon the Cross of Calvary.

The first covenant was dependent on man's keeping the law; as soon as Adam willfully turned away from God's revealed will for him the old covenant became ineffective. Let us remember the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus Christ at the Lord's Supper. Jesus said, “This is the new covenant in my blood, do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11:25) There are many truths to grasp as the children of God partake in the covenant under the blood of Christ.

The first is grasping Christ as the Mediator of this new covenant. Hebrews 9:15 says, “For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”

A mediator (*mesites*) is one who mediates between two parties. Ascribed to Christ He is the one who actually unites repentant sinners with God thus bringing peace between God and men who come to Christ for forgiveness. (The Complete Word Study of the New Testament; Practical Word Studies of the New Testament)

Jesus is the Mediator chosen by God because He is perfect and without sin. He is the one able to present the terms of the new covenant perfectly. Our Lord is the mediator who is able to please God because He is both Divine and human,

proven pure and holy to His Father through obedience and His sufferings. He is infinite in wisdom and knowledge and power to direct all things. (Matthew 28:18; John 5:22, 25-27) Through a relationship with Christ Christians can know the perfect will of God for them and be enabled by the Holy Spirit to live out Christ joyously and achieve all the Lord has for them.

Because God is holy, He can enable you to be holy devoted to Him. (1 Peter 1:16) When you suffer in the work of God you are enabled to keep going because of the power of God. (2 Timothy 1:8-9) When revelation of sacrificial service is given to you, Christ sends the Holy Spirit to provide the Spiritual gifts to be exercised sacrificially for the edification of the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12-14)

The Sunday School Times ran the true story of some kids who had illumination of living a life of holiness expressed through sacrificial love. "In 1945 some English children sent new toys to children in India. After receiving the gifts, a missionary challenged the children from India to bring their old toys to church so they can be taken to some children in a nearby village, who had never heard of Christ and didn't know about Christmas.

The following Sunday the gifts were received and to the surprise of the missionary, the children gave their new toys and kept the old ones. When asked why, a little girl said, 'When we think of what God and Christ did for us, we could not give less than our best in His name.'" (Knights Master Book of 4,000 Illustrations)

Christ is able accomplish this in His people because being human He became a faithful, merciful high priest. (Hebrews 2:17) Having suffered, He is able to help us when we suffer, (Hebrews 2:18) Being sinless when tempted He is able to help us overcome temptation and sympathize with our weaknesses. (Hebrew 4:15) Because of His temptations, sufferings and faithfulness we can approach the Throne of God with confidence expecting mercy and enjoying the Lord's grace in our times of need. (Hebrews 4:16) Because of His glorified humanity He is able to be the Head of the true church.

Christ's death on the Cross made Him the perfect mediator and His shed blood offers the repentant forgiveness of sin. Hebrews 10:16-17 says, "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds... Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." Hebrews 10:15 says, "The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this."

The Holy Spirit takes the written Word of God and puts it firmly on the hard drive of our minds while placing God's truths firmly in our hearts. "In August 1987 I placed my sins at the foot of the Cross and invited the Lord Jesus Christ to come into my heart. At that moment the Holy Spirit placed deep within my spiritual heart that I was forgiven and I had a fresh

clean start before God. I thank God that no one was there, it was just me and the Holy Spirit of Christ as I drove down interstate 70, just 10 miles west of Salina, Ks.

I started attending this church the following Sunday after my new life in Christ started. Within three weeks of attending this church, a wife appointed elder of this church, who now no longer attends here, met me out front on a Sunday morning as I was coming into church and said, 'You will never last, you will quit living for the Lord.' After having the Lord to continue to do a work in me for nearly 20 years and after being in the ministry for 5 years, I had a man who had 5 plus years Bible college training send his wife to inform me that he had been hearing about my past, before Christ – indicating that I was unfit to be in ministry.

Either one of those two incidents involving people claiming to be in the service of Christ could have destroyed my faith in what is often called the church structure. Although both statements hurt deeply, neither of them crippled my walk with the Lord nor put a stop to God's call on my life. Why, because the Holy Spirit of Christ, who enables me to cry out 'Abba, Father' (Galatians 4:4-6) reminded me that I was adopted into the family of God, the day Christ came into my life. The Holy Spirit reminds me often of those passages of Scripture that speak of God's forgiveness and that He no longer holds my past sins against me."

Christians who "Grasp Their Authority in Christ" understand "Kingdom Authority." They have an adversary who is the accuser of the brethren, (Revelation 12:10) but because of the Cross of Calvary they have a Savior who is the Mediator who makes the way for them to approach the Throne of Grace with confidence. (Hebrews 4:16) Their healthy relationship with Christ enables them to have standing with God who is merciful and gracious. They are not shaken by accusers, but strengthened in the sure promise of forgiveness and empowerment to enjoy God's best.

Christ's purity enables Him to be our perfect Mediator. Forgiveness found in Him brings true peace with God and opens the door to purification from sin. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

This is one of the most blessed passages of Scripture that can be read and meditated upon in the Word of God. Christians get so blessed with the forgiveness of sin in this passage of Scripture they miss its enabling portion. They miss the "purify us from all unrighteousness." "Purify" (*katharizo*) in the spiritual sense from the pollution and guilt of sin. (The Complete Word Study of the New Testament)

The child of God who confesses or agrees with God on what sin is and desires to be set free from that sin will, in due time be delivered from the power and practice of that sin. (Matthew Henry Commentary; Commentary, Critical and Explanatory) This is accomplished by the presence of the Spirit and the sanctification or cleansing of the spiritual heart. (Hebrews 9:14)

Christians who enjoy their authority in Christ grasp the two sides of being purified by the blood of Christ. The first is this: the shed blood of Christ on the Cross delivers us from the guilt of sin and gives us a right standing or “justification” before God. This is because Jesus’ death for the sins of the world satisfied His holy law. Secondly, the child of God needs the purifying work of the Holy Spirit of Christ. King David knew this, for he prayed, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew in me a steadfast spirit. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore in me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.” (Psalm 51:10-12)

Listen to this true confession of a man who came to know Christ and who lives in the presence of the Holy Spirit of Christ. He writes, “I came to know Christ and was forgiven of sins that broke the heart of all who were close to me, but especially the heart of the Christ who died for me. On the night of my salvation the Holy Spirit so confirmed the forgiveness of God, He placed within me a joy that burst forth in my speech and life.

However, there was that besetting sin that came into my life daily. At first I dismissed it, after all I am under the blood of Christ, a sinner saved by grace. After all it is a sin that no one will find out about and does no harm to anyone.

Yet within me there was that urging for purification from this sin that I committed daily.

Then one day the Scriptures revealed to me what is most important to God, ‘Surely, you desire truth in the inner part...’ (Psalm 51:6) At that moment it was clear to me that this daily sin was breaking the heart of my Lord who died for me.

This is when I got serious. I confessed my sin to my Christian wife and then to an elder of my local church. Then I asked the question of questions which laid the groundwork for my ability to lay this sin at the foot of the Cross, ‘Lord just how ugly is this sin to you?’ In just a few months I had Holy Spirit revelation of how this sin was the base sin that caused the most grief to all I loved. If not repented of and fully delivered, this sin would be the root sin that would cause me to join the many, those who sacrifice the Lord all over again and bring Him to public disgrace. (Hebrews 6:6) Upon this revelation, I laid this disgraceful act at the foot of the Cross, and over the course of time I have come to fully enjoy the authority that Christ had given me over my sinful nature, the world and Satan’s lies. To this day I enjoy the continual

mortifying of sin that comes between me and my Lord. To this day I enjoy the forgiving, purifying blood of Christ." (writer wants anonymity)

Let the Holy Spirit lay this truth deep within your spiritual heart, "'Grasping Your Authority in Christ' begins with understanding that it was your sins that put Christ on the Cross, asking the Lord show you what He thinks of your sin, and trusting in the eternal forgiveness and purifying power of the blood of Christ." (Pastor Terry Laughlin)

All that Christ did on the Cross of Calvary conquered the effects of sin that Adam brought upon mankind. With eyes focused on Christ and spiritual hearts led by the Holy Spirit of Christ, Christians live a victorious life. They are empowered to do sacrificial service to the Body of Christ and unto those without Christ, walk in the peace of God and enjoy the purifying work of the Holy Spirit of Christ.

Let us come and enjoy the Lord's Supper, Communion.